

MINUTES
OF THE
FORTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL SESSION
OF THE
TUSKALOOSA
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

HELD WITH
Little Sandy Church,
TUSKALOOSA COUNTY, ALABAMA,

From the 20th to the 23d of Sept. 1879.

*The next Session will be held with Bethany Church,
fourteen miles West of Tuskaloosa, on the Columbus
Road, commencing on Friday, 9 o'clock, A. M.,
before the Third Sabbath in
September, 1880.*

TUSKALOOSA, ALA.

PRINTED BY J. F. WARREN, "TIMES" OFFICE.

1879.

MINUTES.

LITTLE SANDY CHURCH, TUSCALOOSA CO. ALA., }
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th, 1879. }

1. The Forty-Seventh Annual Session of the Tuscaloosa Baptist Association met with the Little Sandy Church, on Saturday, before the third Sabbath in September, 1879. The Introductory Sermon was preached by Elder J. H. Foster, from Jas. 3;6—"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

2. After a recess of one hour, during which a most bountiful dinner was served on the grounds, the Delegates assembled, for the transaction of business, in the Meeting House, and Bro. J. B. Eddins, the former Moderator, called the Association to order. A hymn was sung, and prayer was offered by Elder Jas. Hogan.

3. The Delegates, from the various churches, came forward, as they were called, bearing their Letters of Representation, and voted for Moderator. Bro. J. B. Eddins was re-elected. By request of the Moderator, Brethren T. M. Barbour and H. H. Brown read the Letters.

4. An opportunity was given for new churches to join the Association, when Delegates, from Vance's and from Mt. Pleasant, came forward, bearing petitionary Letters, and were cordially received into the membership of this Association.

5. The following Committees were appointed by the Moderator, to serve during this Session:

PREACHING.—W. F. Goodson, J. D. Blocker, G. W. Hassell, Jas. White, together with the Pastor and Deacons of Little Sandy Church.

DOCUMENTS.—J. H. Foster, A. K. Yancey, H. H. Brown.

NOMINATIONS.—Jas. Hogan, W. H. Wilds, J. G. Lowery.

FINANCE.—T. W. Smith, Wm. Mellown, J. H. Payne.

DECEASED MINISTERS.—O. F. Gregory, T. M. Barbour, Jno. Sartain.

And the following to serve for one year:

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.—H. H. Brown, W. F. Goodson, J. R. Bell.

STATE MISSIONS.—F. D. Hale, Wm. Mellown, John Sartain.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.—A. K. Yancey, C. E. Rice, Jas. White.

EDUCATION.—J. H. Foster, J. T. Yerby, J. W. Hosmer.

HOME MISSIONS.—G. T. Green, Jas. Hogan, R. F. Palmer.

6. Received Correspondence as follows:

UNION ASSOCIATION.—Elder J. C. Foster and G. A. Stewart, with Letter.

NORTH RIVER.—Elder J. B. Harbin and S. H. Carr.

CAHABA.—Elder W. A. Bishop and R. Y. Woods.

CANAAN.—Elder J. H. Hendon.

MULBERRY.—Rev. Wm. Cochrane. HARMONY—Minutes.

Also, the following brethren were cordially received, and welcomed to seats with this body:—Dr. W. H. McIntosh, Corresponding Secretary of the Home Mission Board, of the Southern Baptist Convention; Dr. T. M. Bailey, Corresponding Secretary of the State Mission Board; Rev. O. F. Gregory, State Board of Education, and Prof. A. K. Yancey, A. C. F. College.

7. On motion, the following standing Resolution was adopted:—*Resolved,*

That the Association shall take full time for the consideration of every important subject that may come before it.

8. Returned Correspondence, as follows:

UNION—Prof. A. K. Yancey, Rev. J. M. Chism, F. W. Stokes, Jas. White.—J. R. Bell to write.

NEW RIVER—T. A. Rice, T. W. Smith, G. Strickland.—Rice to write.

NORTH RIVER—Revs. J. W. Hosmer, R. S. Cox and H. W. Cole, T. W. Smith, G. T. Green.—H. H. Brown to write.

HARMONY—Rev. J. T. Yerby, W. F. Goodson, A. S. Roland, John A. Vance.—W. H. Wilds to write.

CAHABA—Rev. O. F. Gregory, J. B. Eddins, J. H. Payne, Newbern Rogers.—Payne to write.

MUDD CREEK—Rev. W. J. Herring, D. A. Flournoy, J. D. Lancing.—Jas. Hogan to write.

CANAAN—W. F. Goodson, R. C. Caffee, S. W. Vance.—J. G. Lowery to write.

MULBERRY—Rev. T. M. Barbour, L. C. Pratt, Wm. Logan—Barbour to write.

9. The Committee on Preaching reported:—That Rev. James Hogan preach to-night; Rev. L. B. Harbin to preach at Big Sandy, to-night; Prayer Meeting, to-morrow morning, at 9 o'clock, to be conducted by Rev. J. W. Hosmer; Elder T. M. Bailey to preach the Annual Missionary Sermon, at 11 o'clock; Dr. W. H. McIntosh to preach at 1 o'clock; also, Dr. McIntosh to preach, in Tuscaloosa church, at night. The Association then adjourned till Monday morning, 9 o'clock. Prayer by Rev. O. F. Gregory.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER, 21.—Rev. J. W. Hosmer, who was appointed to conduct the Prayer Meeting being sick, the services of the Sabbath were opened with prayer by Elder L. B. Harbin. Able and instructive Sabbath School addresses were made by Prof. A. K. Yancey and Dr. T. M. Bailey. At 11 o'clock, the Annual Missionary Sermon was preached by Dr. T. M. Bailey, from 1st Tim. 1:11—"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." After the sermon, a collection was taken up for Missions, amounting to \$37.20. Dr. W. H. McIntosh preached at 1 o'clock, from Gen. 4:9—"Am I my brother's keeper?" Both of these sermons were full of gospel truth, and were worthy efforts of those able and worthy men. The congregation was large and attentive, and we trust that much good seed fell into good ground, which will bring forth fruit in days to come. Elder F. D. Hale preached at night.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 9 o'clock, A. M.

10. The Association met according to previous appointment, and was opened with prayer by Rev. Wm. Cochrane. The Minutes of Saturday and Sabbath were read and approved.

11. On motion, it was agreed that State and Home Missions be made the special order for 10 o'clock.

12. On motion, it was ordered that the Committee on Finance attend to its duties during the noon recess.

13. The hour of 10 o'clock having arrived, the subject of State Missions was taken up, and discussed at length, and with considerable warmth, by Bro. Bailey, Foster, Goodson, Eddins and others, when the following Report was adopted:

Your Committee on State Mission work, are happy to report that the work has been carried on successfully through the State, during the year. The Board is operating in 36 Associations—has had 11 Evangelists in the field. Through their labors, numbers of Churches that were almost extinct, have been saved to the denomination. Ten new Churches have been constituted; 170 Sabbath Schools have been organized; 73 prayer meetings; 315 persons have been baptized in connection with their labors; 30 received by letter into pastor-

less Churches; 882 Churches visited; 95 preaching stations; 235 Churches, meeting every Sabbath; 260 Subscribers for Alabama Baptist; 495 religious visits to families; 24,806 miles traveled; 2,069 sermons and addresses delivered.

To the Executive Committee of the Tuskaloosa Baptist Association:

The following condensed Report will show the amount of work performed in my field of labor, during Associational Year:—Number of Churches visited, 84; Sermons delivered, 118; Addresses, 47; Baptisms, 9; Baptisms in connection with my labor, 54—Total baptisms, 63. Restored, 4; Received by Letter, 14; Deacons ordained, 2; Sunday Schools organized, 21; Prayer Meetings organized, 20; Subscribers to Ala. Baptist, 28; Associations attended, 2; District Meetings attended, 2; Amount received on salary, \$208.50; Miles traveled in performance of my labor, 1,257.

Respectfully submitted,

T. M. BARBOUR,

Dist. Evangelist State Mission Board.

On motion, the Association adjourned for one hour. Prayer by Rev. J. H. Hendon.

MONDAY, 2 O'CLOCK, P. M.

The Association met, and was opened with prayer by Elder John Sartain.

14. The Committee on Home Missions reported:

Your Committee on Home Missions Report:—Southern Baptists have abundant cause to be thankful to God for the great work already accomplished by the Home Mission Board. Within thirty-five years, they have established many Churches in destitute places, and upheld the hands of many other Churches that were ready to faint, until they became self-sustaining, and many of those Churches have already returned to the Board a thousand fold of what had been contributed to aid them, and have also become great centres, from which have radiated influences to bless mankind. In this noble work of disseminating the gospel and guaranteeing its support all over our Southern country, our Board is arduously laboring with encouraging success.

The Indian Territory is included in their field, and among the aborigines of our country there is increasing demand for Schools and for Missionary labor. God has blest this needful work beyond expectation. In answer to the prayers of Christians, accompanied by their alms, He has proven himself "able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think."

Religious instruction of the Colored people, within our bounds, is also going on hopefully under their co-operation with the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Another important field, formerly occupied and abandoned under the auspices of the Foreign Board, has recently, under the Providence of God, fallen into the hands of this Board. Rev. J. B. Hartwell (who has labored so faithfully and so successfully for twenty years in China, has been compelled, by the ill health of his family, to leave his chosen work, for the time being,) has been appointed to a Mission among the Chinese in California, for which he is by past experience, so eminently qualified, and is only waiting for the means of his support to enter upon the work.

All these objects appeal to us for pecuniary aid, and for prayer in their behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSHUA H. FOSTER, Ch'n.

15. On motion, it was agreed that the Collection, taken up on Sabbath, should be divided equally between Foreign, Home and State Missions.

16. The Committee on Deceased Ministers reported:

Scarcely had our last Association adjourned, when the Head of the Church called away from his labors to the rest of Heaven, the young and beloved Pastor of the Tuskaloosa Baptist Church, Rev. W. H. SANDERS. He was never permitted to meet with this body, but during his short pastorate at Tuskaloosa, he greatly endeared himself not only to his own people, but all with whom he came in contact. Pure in life, conscientious in the discharge of every duty, an earnest and consecrated Christian man, his Sermons were full of the Spirit of Christ, and he gave promise of being eminently useful as a Minister of "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." At the early age of 28, he was called up higher, having served his Master faithfully, and been the instrument in doing great good. But the good work which engrossed his life and heart still goes on, and the everlasting gospel is preached to the world: "God buries the workman, but he carries on the work."

We mourn over our untimely loss in the death of this young Minister; but thank God for his life, and labor of love.

O. F. GREGORY,

T. M. BARBOUR,

J. SARTAIN.

} Committee.

17. On motion, Elder J. H. Hendon was invited to present the claims of the Birmingham Church, whereupon a Collection was taken up for this object, amounting, in Cash and Pledges, to \$26.20.

18. The Committee on Finance made the following report :

We the Committee on Finance report:—We have received for Minutes, cash, \$46.00; for Associational purposes, \$14.70; Amount of Collection on Sabbath, \$37.35; for our District Evangelist, \$23.05; for Home Missions, \$5.50—Total, \$143.20.

The following Churches and individuals pledged themselves for the support of State Missions, as follows:—Tuskaloosa, \$550; Gilgal, \$40; North-Port, \$25; Shultz Creek, \$15; Sardis, \$25; Mt. Zion, \$30; Bibbville, \$15; Little Sandy, \$20; Chapel Hill, \$5; Carroll's Creek, \$10; Pleasant Hill, \$12; Bethabara, \$5; Big Creek, \$15; Bethany, \$5; Vance's \$5; Mt. Pleasant, \$5; North-Port S. S., \$5; Pleasant Hill S. S., \$1; Martha Crawford Society, A. C. F. College, \$5; J. D. Blocker, \$5; W. M. Mellown, \$5; J. W. Brown, \$5; T. M. Thompson, \$1; E. C. Smith, \$1; J. M. Watkins, 50 cts. Cash and Pledges for Birmingham Church, \$26.20.

Respectfully submitted,
W. M. MELLOWN, Ch'n.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow. Prayer by Rev. J. H. Foster.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23d, 9 o'clock, A. M.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment, and was opened with prayer by Elder O. F. Gregory.

19. The Committee on Nominations reported:

Your Committee on Nominations beg leave to Report:—To preach the next Introductory Sermon, Rev. O. F. Gregory—Alternate, Rev. F. D. Hale. Missionary Sermon, Eld. J. T. Yerby—Alternate, Eld. T. M. Barbour. Executive Committee:—J. H. Foster, G. T. Green, J. B. Eddins, C. E. Rice, W. F. Goodson, S. R. Hamner, W. R. Dodson. To write the Circular Letter, on Eleventh Article of Faith—A. K. Yancey. To revise Circular—J. H. Foster, T. M. Barbour, W. H. Wilds. Delegates to State Convention—J. H. Foster, J. T. Yerby, T. M. Barbour, O. F. Gregory, J. W. Hosmer, Jas. Hogan, H. H. Brown, C. E. Rice, A. K. Yancey, F. D. Hale, W. H. Wilds, J. B. Eddins.

Respectfully submitted,
JAS. HOGAN, Ch'n.

20. The Committee on Foreign Missions reported:

Your Committee on Foreign Missions beg leave to Report:—The progress of Baptist missions in Foreign lands, is reported as gratifying indeed, and the outlook for the future is hopeful. Indeed, it is said, that in China, where Missionaries have heretofore been roughly treated, they are the most clamorous for the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

Our Northern Baptist brethren report 18,000 baptisms during the year. God, in his mercy, seems to have thrown open wide the doors of the entire heathen world for the reception of the Gospel. It remains to be seen, whether or no, we are willing "to go in and possess the land."

With a membership of 96,000, Alabama Baptists gave, in 1878, to Foreign Missions, \$1,381, or an average of about one and a half cents per member.

The Baptists of Bassein, Burmah, who are much poorer than we are, gave in the same time, an average of about \$4 per member. Contrast the two, and what a picture is presented! The heathen convert thinks he must give. What we need is system. Every christian who is not "an object of charity," should give conscientiously and systematically to the cause of Christ. Does not the fault of our doing so little, lie, in a great measure, with our pastors? Are they doing what they can, to inform their people and to teach them their duty? It is said by pastors of large experience, that where interest in Foreign Missions is maintained in a Church, to a normal point, that all other agencies at home will go as things of course; but that when there is a lack of devotion in their enterprises, that other interests sag accordingly.

We can't all be Missionaries in heathen lands, and have the privilege of administering the water to life to their lips, but blessed be God, He only requires of us such as we have, and it is ours to stay the hands of those thus favored. Then let us, of our substance, give cheerfully for the spread of the Gospel of peace; for the "Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

Respectfully submitted, W. H. WILDS, Ch'n.

Resolved, 1st. That we request all our Churches to make regular and separate contributions in money, to the following interests, fostered by this Association, viz: Foreign Missions, Home Missions, State Missions, and Education, and forward the amounts by their delegation, to our next Session, and that our Pastors bring this matter before their Churches, at every monthly meeting.

Resolved, 2nd. That we honestly endeavor, by the grace and help of God, to raise within the ensuing Associational year, at least \$1,000, and that in order to carry this into effect, we earnestly request every Church to raise an amount, at the rate of at least 50 cents per member, for the various objects demanding our support as Baptists.

21. The following is the report of the Committee on Sunday Schools:

The Committee on Sunday Schools report :—That, owing to a want of statistics at our command, we are unable to state facts satisfactory to ourselves. The Resolutions adopted by this Body, a few years since, intended and calculated, if enforced, to organize more generally and thoroughly, Sunday Schools in connection with the Churches, have not been carried out; and, consequently, we are without full and accurate statistical information as to the work being done in our own Association. Until the plan of those Resolutions, or some other, is made effective for collating and compiling the number of Sunday Schools, established and fostered by our Churches, with their attendants, it is impossible, of course, to report them fully.

We rejoice to know, however, that the Baptists of Alabama are becoming alive to this most important Christian work; that within the last seven years, the number of Sunday Schools in the State, has grown from one hundred and six to about eight hundred; that under the auspices of our State Mission Board, one hundred and seventy have been organized within the last year. These happy results are due to the self-sacrificing, energetic labors of Rev. T. M. Bailey, our indefatigable State Evangelist, and his faithful collaborators in the "Vineyard of the Lord."

We have good reason to believe, from reliable sources, that within the last Associational year, the Sunday School has received a new impetus within the boundaries of this Association, and that much good has been accomplished in this direction; that the Holy Scriptures are being more generally read and studied by our Church members, and faithful instruction, in the worship of God, imparted to the young and honest enquirers after truth.

Some interesting and precious revivals of religion in some of our Churches, during the last year, it is believed, are, in part, attributable to the labors of faithful Sunday School workers—instruments, in God's hands, of winning souls for Christ. It is hoped that the time is not far distant, when our Churches will more fully awake to a more lively appreciation of Sunday work, and actively and prayerfully engage in the organization and maintenance of Sunday Schools.

This work can be most successfully carried on, when the heads of families shall become thoroughly aroused, and shall be willing to assume greater personal interest in the moral, religious training of our children. It will then be found that the Sunday School will serve as a most valuable auxiliary in bringing up the young in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Respectfully submitted,

N. H. BROWNE, Ch'n.

22. The Committee on Documents reported:

Your Committee on Documents Report :—We are glad to read of revivals in a number of the Churches. Dunn's Creek Church has licensed Bro. R. J. Mayfield to preach the Gospel. Two new Churches have been constituted and have been received into our body—Vance's, with twenty members, and Mt. Pleasant with thirteen.

Our Churches, with the exception of the Tuscaloosa Church, have not made full reports, and we do not know what contributions they have made to the several objects patronized by our denomination. In the hope of meeting this difficulty in future, we recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the Executive Committee be instructed to prepare blank forms for Letters, Statistics, Sunday School, and Contributions, and send them to the Churches, with the request that they fill up every blank.

Respectfully submitted,

J. H. FOSTER, Ch'n.

23. The following is the report of the Committee on Education:

In accordance with our usual custom, we, the Committee on Education, submit the following: The space commonly allowed for such a report, reminds us to be brief, but the importance of the subject calls for serious attention at this time, as on former occasions. We are deeply impressed with the conviction that earnest, self-denying effort should be made, by all of our people, to secure, for the rising generation, such an amount of useful learning as may be within their reach. The wise man says: (Prov. 19; 2) "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good."

The famous couplet by Alex. Pope—

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring,"

has, no doubt, served to deter many a one from learning a little, because he supposed he had reason to despair of learning much. If we cannot hope to become well acquainted with Latin and Greek, and Mathematics, and the sciences generally, that is no reason why we should not exert ourselves to learn Arithmetic and to be able to read our own language with

facility, and to speak and write it correctly, and even with elegance. With the helps now accessible, such as Free Schools, Sunday Schools, and cheap books and papers of every variety, it is reasonable to suppose that very few can plead inability to obtain, at least, an ordinary English education. So, then, let us do all that within us lies, to assist the indigent, to stimulate the indolent, and to encourage the despondent.

But your Committee would further urge on the attention of the Association, the education of our sons and daughters in the higher walks of learning; and, as it may, with truth, be said that the education of a self-taught man, is, in general, necessarily defective, we beg leave to call your attention to our Denominational Schools of high grade, in which ample facilities are afforded for obtaining such education as may be desired. In Tuskaloosa is a Baptist Female College, of high order, which has been in successful operation for more than twenty years, now under the care of A. K. Yancey, Jr., who comes to us from Virginia, with the best of recommendations as a Christian gentleman and a scholar, peculiarly fitted for the position he now occupies as President of the Alabama Central Female College. A similar Institution, the Judson, at Marion, is widely known and justly celebrated. The Howard, also, for young men, will bear comparison with any similar Institution, North or South. And last, though not least, is the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, at Louisville, Ky., where our preachers can obtain just such instruction as will suit their necessities, whether in a purely English course of study, or in a full course of the highest grade known in this country.

Respectfully submitted,

R. FURMAN, Ch'n.

On motion adjourned for the space of forty-five minutes. Prayer by Elder T. M. Barbour.

TUESDAY, 1½ o'clock, P. M.

The Association met, and was opened with prayer by Elder Wm. Cochrane.

24. On motion, it was ordered, that the Introductory Sermon, preached by Elder J. H. Foster, at the opening of this Session, be published in the Minutes, instead of the Annual Circular Letter, and that Bro. Foster prepare the same for publication.

25. The following Resolution, in reference to the *Alabama Baptist*, was unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED, That this Association heartily endorse the *ALABAMA BAPTIST*, published at Selma, Ala., by Bro. J. L. West, and that we pledge ourselves to use our utmost efforts to induce the members of our Churches to subscribe for the same, read it, and work for its dissemination.

26. On motion, the Association Fund, amounting to \$14.70 was turned over to the Clerk for his services.

It was agreed that the Association shall hereafter meet on Friday, at 9 o'clock, A. M., instead of Saturday, and that the Introductory Sermon shall be preached Friday night.

27. On motion, the thanks of this body were tendered to the Little Sandy Church and vicinity, for the very generous hospitality extended to the Association during its meeting.

28. Letters to Corresponding Bodies were read and approved.

29. It was ordered that the following Committee, on Aged and Infirm Ministers, be appointed and ordered to report at the next meeting of the Association: J. G. Lowery, H. H. Brown, W. H. Wilds and J. B. Eddins.

30. The following Resolution, in reference to the Alabama Central Female College, was unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED, That we take pleasure in recommending Prof. A. K. Yancey, President of the ALABAMA CENTRAL FEMALE COLLEGE, as an able and efficient instructor of young ladies, and that we heartily recommend this Institution to the members of this Association, and to the public at large.

31. The Executive Committee made the following report:

The Executive Committee instruct me to report:—That immediately after the adjournment of the Association, on the 26th day of September, 1878, the Committee procured the services, as Missionary, of Rev. James Hogan, for the period of three months, at twenty-five

dollars per month. Bro. Hogan entered upon the work about the 1st of October, and confined his labors mostly to the Churches and neighborhoods on the North side of the Warrior river; and completed his contract with the Committee, about the end of the year 1878, and was duly paid.

The Committee are gratified to state, that, from all intelligence which has reached them from every source, Bro. Hogan prosecuted the work, with the most earnest Christian zeal and energy; that under his ministry, a good many conversions were professed, and the Churches receiving his instruction, greatly revived, and some of them materially strengthened in their membership. The Committee might extend this report, giving details, showing the great good believed to have been accomplished by this faithful Minister; but the statements in the report of a Committee, already made, renders it unnecessary to do so. The great success achieved, in so short a period, by our Brother, under God, gives earnest, that those who labor for God, with hearts consecrated to His service, "labor not in vain in the Lord."

Respectfully submitted,

N. H. BROWNE, Secretary.

32. The following are the Reports of the District Meetings:

Report of the First District—The next meeting of the First District of the Tuskaloosa Association, will convene with Shultz Creek Church, on Friday, before the 5th Sunday in Nov. 1880. The Introductory Sermon to be preached by Eld. James Hogan; Eld. L. L. Loveless, Alternate. The following are the questions for Discussion: 1st. What is it that entitles one to a participation of the Lord's Supper? Opened by W. F. Goodson and L. C. Pratt.—2nd. Can a Baptist Church delegate authority to any part of the Church, so as to make the action of said part of the Church final, equivalent to the action of the Church? Opened by W. H. Logan and Joseph Tibbs. 3d. Is it for a Church to become responsible to her Pastor for a stipulated salary for his services? Opened by Wm. Mellown and John Lowrey, Sr.—4th. What is the mutual obligation of Church and Community to support the Gospel? Opened by J. H. Ward and D. A. Flournoy.

JAMES HOGAN, Moderator.

Jno. G. LOWREY, Clerk.

Report of the Second District—The next meeting of the Second District will be held with Big Sandy Church, on Friday, before 5th Sabbath in August, 1880—Elder F. D. Hale to preach the Introductory Sermon; J. M. Chism, Alternate. Friday evening Discussion:—What relation do the doctrines of Regeneration and Justification sustain to each other? To be opened by Bro. J. A. Payne, followed by Bro. M. B. Smith. Saturday Morning, Elder J. T. Yerby; Elder J. A. Payne, Alternate. Saturday Evening Discussion: What is the duty of Baptists with reference to the exhortation contained in Jude, 8d, Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the Saints. Opened by Elder T. M. Barbour.

Report of the Third District—The next meeting will be held with Pleasant Hill Church, commencing on Friday before the first Sabbath in Sept. 1880. Introductory Sermon by Eld. O. F. Gregory; J. M. Chism, Alternate. Friday Evening Discussion: What relation do the doctrines of Regeneration and Justification sustain to each other? To be opened by R. S. Cox. Saturday Morning Discussion: What is the duty of Baptists in reference to the exhortation found in Jude 3d? To be opened by Prof. Yancey. Saturday Evening—Exegesis, Rev. 22; 17, by Elder R. Furman. Exegesis, Matt. 16; 18, by Eld. O. F. Gregory. Essay by N. H. Browne, Subject: Of What importance is a Sunday School?

JOSEPH APPLING, Clerk.

H. H. BROWN, Moderator.

Report of the Fourth District—The next meeting of this District will be held with the Big Creek Church, commencing on Friday, before the 2nd Lord's day in August, 1880—Rev. O. F. Gregory to preach the Introductory Sermon; Eld. F. D. Hale, Alternate. 1st Question for Discussion: Were the Israelites saved by looking, or by faith, in the brazen serpent? To be opened by Bros. W. R. Hughes and J. R. Bell. 2nd Question: How can a deeper interest in Missions be awakened in our Churches? To be opened by Bros. James White and Gray Strickland.

J. R. BELL.

PROGRAMME OF SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION :

The next S. S. Convention will be held with the North Port Church, commencing Friday, before last Sunday in July, 1880. *Friday Morning.* Sermon by Rev. Jas. Hogan; Alternate Rev. J. T. Yerby. *Afternoon,* Five minute Reports from Schools, followed by free discussion. *Saturday, A. M.,* The Blackboard and how to use it, Rev. O. F. Gregory, followed by Questions and Discussions. *Afternoon,* Discussion : The art of Securing Attention; opened by Bro. W. H. Wilds; Alternate, Bro D. A. Flournoy. *Sunday*—Morning appointment to be filled by Committee on Devotion; also several speakers for Mass Meeting, in the Afternoon
G. W. CLEMENTS, Clerk.

33. The Minute Fund was ordered to be applied to the printing of these Minutes, and the Minutes to be deposited, for distribution, at the store of Mr. J. D. Spiller, in Tuscaloosa, and at the store of Messrs. Bell & Freeman, in North Port.

34. On motion, it was ordered, that after singing, taking the parting hand and prayer, by Elder J. H. Foster, the Association should adjourn, to meet with Bethany Church, fourteen miles west of Tuscaloosa, on the Columbus road, at 9 o'clock, A. M. Friday, before the third Sabbath in September, 1880. Thus closed another most harmonious, and as we trust, a profitable meeting of this body. May the good seed sown bring forth an abundant harvest to the honor and glory of God.

J. B. EDDINS, Moderator.

J. T. YERBY, Stated Clerk.

INTRODUCTORY SERMON.—(BY REV. J. H. FOSTER.)

[Published by order of the Association.]

James, Third Chapter.—The language of the whole Chapter is strikingly figurative. After presenting some general thoughts suggested, I shall seek to develop more particularly the sixth verse, except its first clause. James 3 : 6. So is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature ; and it is set on fire of hell.

The tongue is the principal member employed in articulate sounds. Aided by other organs, it sends forth words on their mysterious embassy. So paramount is its office that languages are called *tongues*. Inspired Apostles spake with *tongues*—(Acts 2; 8 & 19; 6.) Unto Jesus every *tongue* shall make confession.—(Phil. 2; 11.) The tongue only, of all the organs employed, is mentioned as the origin and cause of speech. And a wonderful instrument it is. But yesterday we stood amazed when we read of the telephone, which, catching the words from human lips, transmitted them unchanged, with lightning speed, to distant hearers, beyond the many leagues of intervening lands or seas;—of the phonograph which retracing its record on the scroll, repeats the words, in weeks, and years, and generations to come. But these astounding discoveries are only the imperfect applications of old principles that have operated unceasingly since “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”—(Job, 38; 7.) Admiring then the skill of Bell and Edison, shall we not much more admire the wisdom of Him, who devised these laws, and skilfully adapted man’s physical organism to his wonderful surroundings? Are you surprized at the performance of the phonograph? And why not surprized, when, under the operation of the same law of action and equal re-action, the distant mountain-cliff re-echoes your words with the distinctness of human utterance? Simply because it is old,—you have never known it otherwise. And why are you not, more than all, surprized that the quick movements of so little a member as the tongue should frame words and sentences, which, at the bidding of mind, leap forth, courier after courier, borne on the wings of the wind, as swift, sure messengers to other minds. Not that it is not wonderful, but because there is nothing new in it. The first sound you ever heard was a human voice. With the tongue, your mother taught your earliest lessons. Its musical tones quelled your childish fears, and filled your little heart with joy. So early in life did you learn that through the tongue are breathed the tenderest sympathies of our nature. Your childhood’s joys were doubled by its silver notes. Upon the listening ear of a chosen maiden your words of true love fell in tones softer than Eolian strains. The symphonies of that famed Lyre of Orpheus, which tamed the fiercest of wild beasts, could not have entranced your soul as did those simple words that gave back the answer of a loved and loving heart. The teacher opens his mouth, and the trophies of scientific research stand in brilliant array before you, or the treasures of classic lore are laid at your feet. The orator utters his voice, and the turbulent passions of the mob are quelled, or anon, as a skilful general leads his hosts from position to position for some grand onset, so he leads them and lashes those passions to fury, and wields the multitude as the storm-wind sways the forest. The preacher tells, in simple words, the story of redeeming love, and men, hardened in sin and steeped in crime, gaze, in mute amazement on the wonderful cross, till sweetly subdued by this stupendous exhibition of Divine Love, they drop their arms of rebellion, and surrender themselves in perpetual allegiance to Him who gave His life a ransom for many: Amazing power! Given for man’s good,—for God’s glory,—but alas! perverted by sin to the basest of uses. Such is the work of the Tongue.

The complaint of the Apostle is against an unwarranted license of the tongue, allowed not by lying, wicked men only, but tolerated by professed christians;—a license claimed by the tongue of the most pious, the most careful. "The tongue can no man tame."—(James 3 ; 8.) "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."—(James 3 ; 2.) Where can such a man be found? This passage then chimes in with the general spirit of revelation in the prohibition of all evil speaking. Like all other vices, this has different degrees:—first a careful insinuation, a vague hint,—then a more unequivocal declaration—then bitter malediction, cursing man. It follows the course of nature;—first an embryo,—an egg; then a fledgling; then a mighty soaring vulture, spewing rottenness and filth over all beneath it. If you would destroy the cockatrice's den, you must crush the eggs before they are hatched. So God's word deals with sin. So it deals with this sin. It denounces every grade of slander. It enjoins its authoritative prohibition against every degree of evil speaking, from the highest to the lowest, "Speak evil of no man."—(Tit. 3; 1-2. Jas. 4; 11.) God forbids slander, in all its forms, because in every degree it is an evil, hateful to Him, and fraught with terrific consequences.

The best writers on morals teach the same great lesson. "He who reports the truth (injurious) *unnecessarily*, is guilty of slander."—(Dagg's Mor. Sci. p. 198 ; Wayland's do. p. 268.)

Human law, in Christian countries, incorporates the same principle. Slander is punished under the common law, on the ground of the public mischief resulting therefrom.—(Bishop's Crim. Law, Art. 795; Clark's do. Art. 1522 ; Ala. Crim. Code, 4107.)

The law written in the human heart reflects the Divine teaching. The great representative minds of the world, in all ages, in both Christian and heathen nations, have exposed the folly and wickedness of Slander. Philosophers, orators, poets and painters, have vied with each other in portraying its meanness. Plutarch says "As the hen loathes the plenty of grain spread for her on a clean floor, and scratches in a hole, or is found spurring in a dunghill for one musty grain, so there are over-busy people, who, neglecting such obvious and common things into which any man may enquire and talk of without offence, can not be satisfied unless they rake into the private and concealed evils of every family in the neighborhood." Daniel Webster characterises Calumny as "the spirit that would drag angels down." Shakspeare says, "Who steals my purse steals trash; but he who filches from me my good name, takes that, which not enriches him, but makes me poor indeed." Apelles painted Calumny thus,— "There sits a man with great open ears, inviting her, with his hand held out, to come to him, and two women, Ignorance and Suspicion, stand near him. Calumny breaks out in fury, her countenance is comely and beautiful, her eyes sparkle like fire, and her face is inflamed with anger. She holds a lighted torch in her left hand, and with her right, twists a young man's neck, who holds up his hands in prayer to the gods. Before, goes Envy, pale and nasty; on her side are Fraud and Conspiracy. Behind her follows Repentance, clad in mourning, and her clothes torn, her head turned backwards, as if she looked for Truth, who comes slowly after." Thus it appears that the common judgment of mankind endorses the Scripture teaching and condemns Slander.—(Quotations from numerous standard authors might be inserted.)

Having made these general remarks, I now invite your attention to the particular forms of expression employed in the 6th v. Take the figure in the 2nd clause. It teaches a spiritual operation by a physical phenomenon. "So is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body." Of course, that which defiles, must itself first be defiled. It may appear a curious assertion that the defiled tongue defiles the whole body, for it can not be brought into contact with more than a small proportion of it. If this had been said of defiled hands, it is easy to see how they might besmear the whole body with their filthy covering; for they can touch every part of it. But then that defile-

ment might be easily cleansed with pure water; and if that were all, there had been no occasion for that desponding cry of Job, "If I wash myself in snow-water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me."—(Job 9; 30,31.) The defilement is too deep for external cleansing. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint;" (Isaiah 1; 5,) and every pulsation of it drives the poisoned humors of the blood through the pores, and, every moment the external pollution is renewed.—No,—the defilement is not superficial, but it is internal, filling the arteries and veins and sinews and bones, and is fed, and propagated by the inflamed, swollen ulcerated, cancerous tongue, which pours its filthy, horrid stream upon the descending food and mingles it with the chyle and the blood, and pollutes and poisons the whole body. Such is the terrible figure. But like all figures, it falls short of the substance of which it is only the shadow. The soul is of more value than the body. The body shall perish. But on the immortal soul is character being stamped for eternal ages. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—(Mat. 16;26. Mark 8;36. Luke 9;25.) The tongue plays a large part in impressing the character of the soul. True, it is the servant of the soul, and has, of itself no power to speak good or evil, except as directed. How it comes to speak evil will be considered. "Suffice it now, that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—(Mat. 12;24.) But what I wish you to note at this point is, the great law of our moral nature indicated in the text. One of the laws of matter is that action and reaction are equal; so if two equal cannon balls, moving with like speed in opposite directions, should meet in their line of motion, the reaction of each on the other would stop it, and together they would fall to the ground. A similar law prevails in morals. Every act put forth, reacts upon the character. One's acts then, not only indicate his character, but moreover, affect and modify that character. Thought put forth in action, reacts and intensifies itself. You, who are fathers and mothers, know very well that you love your children as soon as they are born. Your paternal affection prompts you to watching and care, and fills your hands with self-denying acts of tenderness and love. These acts of devotion react upon your hearts and intensify your love. And towards that poor, suffering, invalid child, for whose comfort you have laid so many plans, and for whose relief you have labored through so many long years of solicitude,—towards that helpless child your heart goes forth in tenderer yearnings than towards any other. The law is this. *We love those for whom we labor; and the more we labor the more we love.* But this law of action and reaction holds equally with the malignant affections. *We hate those against whom we strive; and the more we toil the more we hate.* It has grown into a proverb, that "a man can forgive any thing except an injury he has himself done another." And this explains the bitter malignity that some men cherish towards those on whom they have heaped unprovoked obloquy and insult. I need not say that this hatred does a man no good. He is wicked, and "his tender mercies are cruel;"—(Prov. 12;10,) and the "cruel troubleth his own flesh."—(Prov. 11;17.) Hatred is opposed to the spirit of the gospel. In it there is no single trait of the spirit of Christ; and "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—(Rom. 8;9.) If, therefore, you have any regard for your own happiness, your own welfare, your own safety, that will prompt you to labor for the good of others: and inasmuch as you can affect the welfare of others by your tongue, your duty to yourself requires that you speak well of them. For you can not speak ill of them without hurting your own soul, your own real character, that which is your most valuable possession, in time, in eternity. You may hurt their reputation, but you certainly hurt your own character. Nor can you speak well of them, truthfully, without doing yourself good. O! then, when tempted to speak evil of another, check the wicked thought, and ask, "has he no good trait?" (and who has not?) and turn the bitter cup you were about to quaff, into sweetness, by praising his *one* virtue, if he have *only one*;

and it shall be a strengthening cordial to your spirit. Hurt not your own soul, by speaking the bitter word. Swallow not your spittle till the cancer on your tongue be cut away, and the wound be healed by the balm of gentle, loving words. O ! let not your tongue defile your whole body.

I have spoken of the law of action and equal reaction. But there is another law of matter, which the Scriptures have preferred to use in illustration of the influence of one's acts on his character. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—(Gal. 6; 7.) And this brings out the thought of the text more forcibly. When you sow a seed, you do not expect to reap one seed, or two, or ten, but thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold. A single seed sometimes yields a thousand, or even a myriad. Then too, this is not one sowing, and one reaping. Nor do we wait, as with the natural grain, for the year to roll around. But we sow to-day, to reap to-morrow, to sow again, and so the process is repeated continually. How naturally, then, how steadily, and how *rapidly* is character ruined ! But a few brief years had passed after the great master had painted the most lovely face he had ever seen, the face of a beautiful boy, when among the prison cells he found the most hateful human countenance, which he painted for a contrast, and discovered, to his amazement, that that same faultless face had been transformed by crime and passion, oft-repeated, into this hideous monster. Life is a rapid series of sowings and reapings, and the soul must feed upon the harvest which it grows. He that "sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind ; it hath no stalk ; the bud shall yield no meal."—(Hos. 8; 7.) "He that goeth forth, and weepeth, bearing *precious seed*, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."—(Psalms 126; 6.) On these sheaves he feeds and grows strong. From them he sows for a new harvest of accumulated sheaves of precious grain. But if one would reap a valuable harvest, the grains he bears for the sowing must be good in kind. Let him go forth and sow the bitter weeds that spoil our milk. Who will call him a wise man ? But he reaps his harvest and sows his grain and reaps again. Only bitter weeds can he gather. On them must he live. Them only can he propagate. They convert the "milk of human kindness" into bitterness,—healthful energy into laggard perverseness,—virtue into vice. Too late he learns his folly. He sows the wind to reap the whirlwind. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."—(Prov. 18; 211.) "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness therein is a breach of the spirit."—(Prov. 15; 4) "He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they may speak no guile."—(1 Pet. 3; 10.) Even self-love then, standing as it does, far below the highest motive, appeals in its strongest arguments, and cries "let not your tongue speak evil, for in so doing, it will defile your whole body."

Again, as the body can not move in the midst of filthy surroundings without being defiled, so the mind can not dwell among scenes of vice without becoming contaminated. And our words affect our characters, as all our bodily acts do, by fixing our attention more undividedly and more intensely on the subject before us. Murder is an act of the body,—of the hand. But it is the result of thought, of months, or it may be of years of continuance. But it is the culmination,—the climax of thought. The thought never was so intense before the act as then, and the impression on the heart was never so vivid and strong. In a moment the man grows a hundred-fold worse. It is as if a photographer should let the light in, little by little, upon his plate ;—impressions are made, but they are very faint, and may be obliterated by stronger ones ;—but now, suddenly, he pours upon the object the direct rays of the sun, condensed by a powerful lens ;—and instantly—quick as thought—the picture is set. So the act of the hand sets the character of the murderer in such glaring colors, that he can never turn his eyes away from them, and looking upon the horrid picture, he grows worse and worse, heaping up wrath

against the day of wrath. So does the man who murders the reputation of his fellow-man. He has boasted of his keen penetration, which discerns the faults of others,—has cherished evil—surmisings, base suspicions,—until, at length, murderous words,—poisoned arrows of the tongue,—have escaped his lips;—his character is set;—he dwells upon the picture and is ever after, more and more ready for a repetition of the act. The purest reputation is no safer with him than is your life with the murderer in the dark. Goldsmith has said, “that the tiger having once tasted human flesh, afterwards pursues every man who crosses his path. So he who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after his most agreeable repast on murdered reputation.”

Following this law, it is equally true that good thoughts, culminating in good words or good deeds, react, in the same vigorous manner, on character, and develop all that is good and noble. “A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,”—(Prov. 25;11,) giving pleasure, to every beholder. But he who paints the picture, scans it, and enjoys it, and improves by it more than any one else. The Bible abounds in illustrations of this law of our being. Satan took advantage of it in procuring the fall. When Eve gazed upon the fruit, and tolerated and considered the suspicion of God’s character, the result was sure.—(Gen. 3;5, 6.) Moses symbolized this law in the brazen serpent. While the Israelite looked upon his poisoned, swelling limb, he sickened and died. When he looked away to the appointed remedy, he recovered and lived.—(Numbers 21;9.) In this principle lies the transforming power of the gospel. “*Look* unto me and be ye saved.”—(Is. 45;22.) Christ is the image of God.—(Heb. 1;3.) The gospel proclaims Him.—(Rom. 1;9, 16.) “We all with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, so as by the spirit of the Lord.”—(2 Cor. 3;18.) The sun’s light affects every thing on earth, not in its appearance only, but in its reality. If that light were green, every object would both *appear* and *be* different from what it is. So the scenes we contemplate shed the influence of their varied light upon us, and affect and modify our character. The old French proverb, invoking evil on the head of him who thinks it, finds its fulfilled answer in daily human experience, and “he who speaks ill of another, makes himself such an one as he spake of.” There is no surer road to perdition than that along which are strewn the corpses and the bleaching bones of murdered reputation. Men glide over this descending grade so smoothly, and with so little effort, that they suspect not their speedy and awful destination. Drunk with the fatal drops they have swallowed, they cry aloud to all by the wayside, and are ready to curse, as fools, and as enemies, those who leap not aboard their crushing car, and who join them not in their work of destruction. In their infatuation, you cannot convince them that “the tongue is full of deadly poison;”—(Jas. 3;8,) for like the most virulent natural poison, this is hard to detect before it has wrought its ruin. There are poisons so destructive, that a single drop insinuated into the veins, produces death in three seconds; and yet no chemical science can separate that virus from the contaminated blood, and show the metallic particles glittering palpably and say, “behold it is there.”—(F. W. Robertson.) Beware, O man! lest the little member thou usest so adroitly against thy fellow, ooze out its fatal drops, and poison all thy blood, and destroy thee forever!

“It sets on fire the course of nature.” Suppose you interpret this “sets in operation the course of nature.” What is this “course of nature?” It is to grow, and spread, and propagate, and multiply, and increase. From little grains are great harvests. Is it a root of bitterness,—a noxious, loathesome weed? Then these are the seeds that most surely spread, and grow in every soil. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the four winds of heaven scatter them in every direction, and wherever they fall they find a congenial soil, and grow without culture. Take the ineradicable bitter weed, for illus-

tration.—(A wild, bitter chamomile, that multiplies by the million.) I have been asked, "how can it be destroyed?" I have answered, "pull up every weed before it seeds, everywhere that it is found, and continue the process until it disappears." How hopeless an undertaking where so many must persistently work together! And yet, if God supplant it not, I see no alternative but that our children, and our children's children must drink the bitter milk. But more hopeless would be the task of extirpating the seeds of calumny that have been broad-cast over our land. They will follow the course of nature. They will grow, and ripen their seeds, and scatter them, and generations yet unborn will drink of their bitterness and poison, mingling with all that is sweet and nutritious in social life. "A woman who freely used her tongue to the scandal of others, made a confession to the priest of what she had done. He gave her a ripe thistle-top, and told her to scatter the seeds, one by one. She did so, and returned and told him. He bade her go back, and gather the scattered seeds. When she objected that it would be impossible, he replied, that it would be still more difficult to gather up and destroy all the evil reports she had circulated about others."

Wherever you look at the course of nature, the same lesson is taught. You may cast a stone above the smooth water of a lake, but when the stone is gone from your hand, you can no longer control its effects. You can never stop the circling waves. They go on, and on, until they break upon the distant shore. With your little tongue, you may utter a word; but when that word has gone out of your lips, you can never stop the tremulous waves it has imparted to the atmosphere. A philosopher once said, those waves go on and out to the infinity of space, affecting every particle of matter in the universe, and leaving an ineffaceable record there, which might appear among the books to be opened in the final day. I know not if such a record be made on the material universe, but the souls of those who hear you are impressed by your every word, and from those souls God will read your record in that day.

The course of nature in the physical maladies that afflict mankind, will furnish further illustration. Slander is a moral pestilence. It is contagious. To come in contact with it is to be poisoned by its effluvia. Learned physicians declare that the dreadful epidemic, that swept some of our cities, last fall, with the besom of destruction, cannot be imparted by contagion. But here is a scourge like the death-plague of the East. If you but touch the garment of the infected, the germs cling to you, and you cannot escape. Russia has discussed the burning of the plague-towns, to prevent its spread. Then, too, this disease possesses all the fiery energy of an *endemic*, and rages in a particular locality as if all the noxious vapors of every sink and pest-hole of the earth were concentrated in one lurid cloud over the devoted place. And yet the plague is not confined to one place. The contiguous atmosphere is impregnated with its germs, and, like a terrible *epidemic*, it spreads around in every direction. No moral purity can stay its progress. Some Doctors say that yellow fever cannot spread in certain localities, because there is no food in the atmosphere to support its germs. Oh! for some favored retreat where the seeds of calumny would die for want of subsistence. But no snow-clad mountain can supply the pure, uninfected atmosphere that will resist its enlargement. No torrid heat can scorch and sear its vital power of reproduction. No polar ice-berg can freeze and kill its germs. A breath from hell gave the world its taint, and all over the earth, the very atmosphere of human life is its home, where it grows and flourishes and riots and destroys. It is "the pestilence that walketh in darkness,—the destruction that wasteth at noon-day."—(Pe. 91:6.) It sits enthroned upon the calm, blue sky,—moves gently on the zephyr,—holds its orgies in the thunder cloud, whirls its demon-dance in the tornado. But whether pausing, gliding, or furiously dashing, all along its pathway are its victims sickening, fainting, dying, dead.

It scorns the piteous wailing of helpless innocence,—mocks the scalding tears of injured piety,—holds high carnival over the noble hearts it has broken, stamping and crushing them under its heavy feet of fire.

But the expression “the *course* of nature,” has been properly rendered “the *wheel* of nature.” “The tongue is a fire,” (Jas. 3;6) and “it sets on fire the wheel of nature.” You have seen a wheel used in fire-works. A paper tube, filled with a powder that burns the more rapidly as it is brought in quicker contact with fresh air, is wound spirally around the rim of the wheel. A fuse is fixed to one end of the tube to ignite it. A friction match is struck,—the fuse is lighted,—the powder begins to burn, and the reaction makes the wheel turn. The faster it burns the faster it turns; and the faster it turns the faster it burns. At first, it drops a few sparks as it slowly turns; presently it throws more sparks farther away,—and soon it whirls furiously, strewing streams of flames and sparks many yards around. The tongue is the friction match. Malice is the powder. Each heart charged with it is a wheel. Rumor is the great wheel, within which all the others move. The world is a dry stubble field through which the wheel rolls. One word of calumny ignites the charge of malice in the heart of him who utters it,—the wheel turns and cannot stop,—he goes on uttering more,—it sends a spark to the stubble, and to another wheel, and presently a thousand wheels are set to burning and rolling in every direction over the broad prairie of dry grass, and as they roll and burn, a roaring whirlwind of fire and smoke envelopes the earth as far as the eye can reach,—of smoke so dense as to blacken the sun,—of flame so fierce that its forked tongues lick the sky, as if they would consume the heavens as well as the earth. “Behold how great a fire a little matter kindleth.” Wander over its broad track, and you look in vain for the beautiful flower, the tender under-grass, the chirping insect, or any form of animal or vegetable life. Ashes, *only ashes*,—distasteful, unseemly ashes, you find. And this is but a faithful picture of the tendency of evil-speaking. If it can be indulged in one case, why not in another,—in all? And if all the *real* faults of every member of any community were paraded before the public mind, you would witness a scene, of which this picture is no exaggeration. And if to these *real* you add the *imaginary* faults, with which lying slanders so often disturb society, you will have a state of things that beggars description. All that is lovely and of good report is consumed in the burning, which is as merciless as that storm of fire that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain.

“It is set on fire of hell” How startling the assertion! And men therefore refuse to accept it, regarding it only as an embellishment employed by the sacred writer. But it is God’s word and cannot, therefore, mean less than it declares. Let us look at it carefully. I need not prove that there *is* such an evil as defamation. No one will deny this. If it exists, it has a cause,—it originates somewhere. True, it proceeds from the *tongue*, but it does not *originate* there. It is a moral act, and proceeds from a moral being. All moral beings are included under two great classes,—the good and the bad. Let us locate its origin with either the one, or the other of these. Whence does it spring? From the good? Surely the voice of calumny issues not from holy lips. God loves not to dwell upon wicked deeds. “He is of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on iniquity.”—(Heb. 1;13) To speak of sinful works, gives Him no joy, and in His word He says no more than His own glory and the sinner’s good demand. “He upbraideth not,” (Jas. 1;5,) but in a still small voice, heard by none else, He gently whispers in the sinner’s heart, and woos him by His love. He rejoices not in the infliction of deserved punishment, but by His own high name He swears “As I live I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”—(Ezek. 33;11.) Nor do these evil acts give pleasure to the *holy angels*. They look with loving solicitude for our return

to God; and "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—(Luke 15;10.) They are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation."—(Heb. 1;14.) And with what tenderness they serve us may be inferred from the precious words "they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."—(Ps. 91;12.) They rebuke us not for our follies,—they chide us not for our sins; but, as a gentle nurse guides the tottering feet of your little child, turning them away from the sharp stones and the fragments of glass that might hurt them, so they softly guide our wayward feet, and rejoice in our feeblest step heavenward. *Holy men*, can no more than holy angels feel pleasure in contemplating and speaking of the wicked acts of others. Their faces are turned upward, and their feet are "pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (Phil. 1;14,)—they hope to be "like Him," (1 Jno. 3;2,) and as they press on, with glowing hearts of love for Him they have not seen, they cannot hate their brother, at their side. No! Not the good man, who trembles at God's word, rejoices in his fellow's fall. Painfully conscious of his own heart sins, he turns a tearful eye of sympathy, and reaches forth a loving hand [of help to the weak and fallen one, and in tones of tenderness, that reach deep down into his better nature, and awaken there the cords of penitence and love, he says, "thou art my brother; let me help thee on thy feet again." Jesus, the model man, sought not by reproachful, angry words, to drive the desponding sinner away to deep despair. An infuriated mob brought to him a woman taken in sin, and hoped to hear from his lips the sentence, that should afford them the diabolical pleasure of stoning her to death. Stooping down, he wrote upon the sand. Impatient for their devilish joy, they clamored for their cause. "*Master*, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act." Looking up, with a serene majesty that inspired their souls with awe, he said, "let him that is without sin among you, cast the first stone;" and as he turned and wrote again, they went out, one by one, from the eldest to the youngest. Fixing his eyes of holy compassion on the poor woman, he said, "hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord." "Neither do I condemn thee."—(John 8;11.) Those words of condescending grace broke the fetters of sin from that guilty soul, and inspired it with hope and joy. No! calumny belongs not to the holy. You will search in vain the records of history for malicious slander proceeding from the pure and the good. Puffed up, self-righteous bigots, who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, you may find, who persecuted unto death,—but holy men, well instructed in the school of the Master, never. Their wisdom is from above. It is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. It bears the "fruit of righteousness" which "is sown in peace of them that make peace."—(Jas. 3;17, 18.) All the good are in harmony. God the Father is love, God the Son is love, God the Spirit is love. The Triune God is love. His words are words of love. His people are a people of love. Every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. (1 John 4;7, 8.) God, angels, good men, love sinners, and are striving together, to lift them up out of their degradation and sin. One spirit pervades all holy beings. It is the spirit that inspired the song of the angels, "*Glorry to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men.*"—(Luke 2;14.) But evil-speaking genders malice and strife. And darkness is not more opposed to light than malice is to love,—than strife to peace. Evil-speaking then, *cannot originate with holy beings*. We must look for its origin somewhere else. As there is but one other class of moral beings, nothing can be clearer than that it is traced to them,—to *unholy*, wicked beings.

But then, *man* is a sinner. And since it is he who is guilty of that vice, may it not *originate* in his own nature? Let man stand forward as a witness

in his own case. He boasts of his *reason*, that elevates him above the brutes. He loves to assign a sufficient cause for whatever he does. Now let him draw on all the mighty resources of his boasted reason, and tell us *why* he should speak evil of his neighbor. Will any one assign a reason? If one eats immoderately, or gets drunk, or gives way to other sensual appetite, you call him a brute. But being yourself a *man* of like passions, you find for his offense some *little* palliation in the weakness of the flesh,—the irrepressible force of bodily appetite. A lower natural propensity is gratified at the expense of his higher moral nature. But there is *real* and *powerful* motive:—*real* and *keen* pleasure. But can you find any such palliation for slander in any of its forms? Suppose my neighbor *has* done wrong, and I *know* it, beyond all doubt; why should I speak of it? There is no *physical* gratification in it. The words that tell of his bad deeds are no sweeter to my tongue than the words that might tell of his many excellencies. There is no *intellectual* gratification in it. No greater acumen or mental sagacity is needed to discern bad traits than must be brought into exercise to discover good ones. I get no *moral* good by it. I am not made wiser, holier, happier. *Fools* may think me a purer man if I throw up both my hands in holy horror, and, pressing crocodile tears from my eyes, cry out, “have you heard of the great fall? *Really* I believe it will *kill* me;” and then go on to detail all the recent scandal with a gusto that would betray my falsehood to wiser men,—but God will look down into the bottom places of my heart, and, in his book, He will write me down a lying hypocrite, without one spark of that “charity that suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, beareth all things, endureth all things.”—(1 Cor. 13:4, 7.) I gain, therefore, *nothing* to *myself* by speaking evil;—nothing physical, nothing intellectual, nothing moral. But, as already shown, I get *only evil*,—heap sin upon sin,—wrath upon wrath, to crush my hating, guilty soul forever. Why, then, should I speak evil of my brother?

But a common plea urged by slanderers, is that they seek to protect the unsuspecting from the imposition of a deceiver. Wiser than others to discern and interpret the secret motives of men, they are become the self-constituted guardians of the ignorant and unwary, and the custodians of public virtue, and, with these pretentious bolsterings, they manufacture easy cushions whereon their consciences may recline, while they trumpet forth, on every breeze, the follies and the crimes, real or imaginary, of some man or woman, who does not quite suit their fancy. Well, possibly in one case out of a hundred thousand, it may be our *duty* to tell some one of the fault of another. God has Himself warned us against deceivers. When it is *plainly* and unmistakably our *duty*, we *must* do it. But only when we *must*, we *may*. By strictly observing this rule, we may escape injury to our own characters, and do good to others. We may save a son from ruin by warning his father. We may protect a friend from fraud, from robbery, from misrepresentation, from murder. Paul’s sister’s son did a good deed when, by telling the chief captain of the Roman guard of the lying in wait of the Jews, he saved the life of the great Apostle.—(Acts 23:16, 22.) When we do only our plain duty in this matter, we shall speak in a spirit very different from that of the common slanderer. There will be no rejoicing in iniquity; but, with reluctance and sorrow, we shall, in the fear of God, perform a painful duty, giving notice to only those who need to know. *This is not slander*. Aside from similar infrequent exceptions, there is no truth in the claim that we can benefit the *community* by exposing faults. He who so pretends goes forth with a lie in his right hand, wherewith he “sets on fire the wheel of nature.” Reason then clamors again for an answer. *Why* should I speak evil?

The slanderer will hardly claim that he does any good, or aims to do any, to the man or woman whose reputation he destroys. If the good of a sup-

posed offender were sought, the simple gospel rule, as given in the 18th of Matthew, and copied *substantially* in the solemn vows of the ancient fraternity of Free Masons, (Mackay's Ahiman Rezon, pp. 126 and 131-135,) and of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, (Grosch's Odd Fellows' Manual, pp. 128 and 144,)—"go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,"—would readily suggest itself to his loving heart as his wisest and safest guide. To parade faults before the public mind, leads to envy, hatred, strife, confusion, bloodshed, and *every evil work*.

If then, there is in fault-finding no good,—physical, intellectual, moral,—none to the speaker, none to the hearer, none to the community, none to the traduced,—if reason can trace from it no good of any sort to any creature, in the name of *reason*, I ask, is it not *irrational*? And if irrational is it not therefore *unnatural* to a rational being? Further, if, to all concerned, the dreadful evils already recited, *do come* from slander;—if the great and the wise of every age have condemned it as *only evil to all*;—if the confessedly wiser and holier gospel holds it responsible for such a train of awful crime and misery;—if all human experience in harmonious accord, with a voice like the sound of many waters, confirms and corroborates these universal teachings;—if ingenuous minds often cry for vengeance against the calumniator of innocence, and popular indignation demand his death as the penalty of his crime;—tell me, O! ye men of towering thought! Has *rational man deliberately decided* to go against reason? Or has not reason rather been dethroned? And reigns not madness in her stead? May we not justly take up Paul's complaint against the Galatians, and cry, "O, foolish people! Who hath *bewitched* you that you should not obey the truth?"—(Gal. 3;1.) What *strange infatuation* thus prompts "man's inhumanity to man?" To what source can we trace it? Where, in all the broad universe, can we find one fit to be the author of calumny,—calumny that curses all and blesses none,—outside of the bottomless pit? The old serpent, the devil,—the author of all confusion, the father of lies, fresh from the depths of his infernal abode, groaning with his engorgement of bitter envy and hate, belched out the cloud of stinking vapor that darkened and poisoned the air. The great red dragon that John saw (Rev. 12;15) cast from his mouth a flood of calumny, the first that polluted the earth. He was the first slanderer. His first word was deceitful, bitter calumny against God. "Hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?"—(Gen. 3;1.) "Impossible;—some mistake. He did not say it, He is too kind,—or if He said it, He did not mean *that*, but only to restrain you from proper indulgence, lest you should become like God,"—"Ye *shall not* surely die."—(3;4.) And so he deceived the woman. And being cast out into the earth with his angels, the work of deception goes on."—(Rev. 12;9.) Having become the Prince of the power of the air," (Eph. 2;2) "the god of this world, he hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."—(2 Cor. 4;4.) Under this infatuation, *man's tongue* does that which *man's judgment* condemns because it brings no good to any, and only *evil to all*;—that against which *man's better nature* indignantly rebels. And yet, like the fire fiend who is never so happy as when his torch has kindled a city into hopeless conflagration, men feel a demon's joy in setting "on fire the wheel of nature," and, in their madness, glory in the widespread ruin they have wrought! What proof is wanting to establish the proposition that "the tongue is set on fire of hell?" Devils, and those who get their wisdom (Jas. 3;15) and their spirit from the devil, are straining all their malicious energies to drag down and destroy. Besides those who have the spirit of devils, I know of none others in the universe who wish to harm a man by evil-speaking. If one loves it, and finds gratification in it, that is itself evidence that his "tongue is set on fire of hell."

The representations we have of Satan justify the inference that he is a being of amazing breadth and power of mind, an intellectual giant, of tireless and irrepressible energy. For thousands of years he has waged a conflict with God, and with all that is good. Fallen himself, and his angels fallen with him, beyond the possibility of recovery and reconciliation, he cannot give over the desperate struggle. No longer permitted to wage war in heaven, he enters the earth as the new theatre of his life-long hostilities. "He hopes not to taste of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy save what is in destroying: all other joy to him is lost." Only one diabolical achievement, sublimely terrible beyond human conception, seems to have crowned his gigantic efforts. *He has conquered man*,—brought all the noble powers of all his numerous race under contribution to his throne, and under the sway of his cruel sceptre. This stupendous result was attained by the agency of *one little instrument*,—*one tongue*,—a tongue not his own, but that of the crafty serpent,—a tongue which, though used for but *one short speech of cruel lies*, has never, in the lapse of the ages, lost its venom. Through that one poisoned tongue, he gained control in the fall, over all human tongues, a great multitude that no man can number, and into all these infused the virus of his own malignant heart; and now men "go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.—(Ps. 58;3.) No longer needs he the tongue of the serpent, since with countless tongues of nobler beings he can now "curse men made after the similitude of God."—(Jas. 3;9.)

In the achievement of this conquest over man, the acme of satanic hope would seem attained, and nothing remaining to stimulate his wicked strife. But the field is not abandoned to the quiet possession of the ruthless victor. *Man* is conquered, but not his Almighty friend. As Abraham hastened to rescue the prisoners taken by the four kings who invaded Sodom,—(Gen. 14 ch.) Messiah comes to lead captivity captive,—to reclaim His chosen race; and, proclaiming amnesty for all who will accept deliverance, He breaks their fetters and gives them the liberty of the children of God. Truth is the thunder of His artillery wherewith He shakes the empire of the father of lies, and makes "*His people free*."—(John 8;32.) The mightiest engines, with which He wields this truth, are human tongues,—tongues not always His, but recaptured, as so many effective batteries from the service of His Arch-enemy." "It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."—(1 Cor. 1;21.) If with one tongue, and that a serpent's, so much was done, how must Satan prize one human tongue for the service it can render him, and with what desperate persistence strive to retain its control! And how will he press all his reserve forces in the crisis, since he knows full well, if lost to him, with what prevailing power God can use *one tongue* to bring his devices to naught! And when so lost, how natural that one like him should swell, and rage, and wreak his direst vengeance on those who, having escaped his power, now turn all their energies against him! And if along the lines that God has called out for the battle, there be some tongue, which, like a picked battery, is dealing death among his ranks, and winning many trophies to the King Eternal, against *this* battery he concentrates a thousand opposing batteries, hoping thereby to silence this one. In the heat of the conflict, men regard not the Divine command, "touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."—(1 Chron. 16;22 and Ps. 105;15.) "Michael durst not bring against the devil a railing accusation," but "they despise dominion, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."—(Judge 8, 9.) Tongues inspired by the archfiend hesitate not to speak hastily, lightly, reproachfully, falsely against those whom God has "set for the defence of the gospel."—(Phil. 1;17.) This is a great, and growing public calamity,—a crying sin, provoking the vengeance of Him who has honored His servants by committing a dispensation of the gospel unto them. The natural tendency of it is

to weaken and destroy God's chosen instrumentality for the salvation of men. And what could please Satan better! Make the preaching of the gospel ineffectual, and you proclaim him the assured sovereign over man's fallen race. And this, from reason's stand-point, is the tendency of all slanders against the heralds of the cross. Yet many are deluded into this folly. They assume that a zeal for purity requires them to inveigh against everyone, of whom evil has been spoken; or, at the least, to withdraw from all such, their confidence and support. This is a sophistry. I cannot now expose it at length. But you will pardon me for making these brief statements before passing it.

1. The rule, if carried out, would cut their acquaintance with Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Jeremiah, and Stephen, and Paul, and ten thousand others "of whom the world is not worthy," and of whom "the time would fail me to tell." Aye, it would remove them far from Him, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."
2. As a matter of historic fact, it may be fearlessly stated that in nine cases out of ten, the preponderance of purity has not been in *favor* of those who have originated, and circulated evil reports, nor *against* those who have suffered by those reports. Hence, it may be stated as a *law*, the shafts of slander are not aimed *downward*, but at those who stand higher in the scale of moral excellence.
3. If men purposely hinder the work of a good minister of the gospel, they stand in precisely the position occupied by the Scribes and Pharisees when Jesus said "Woe unto you * * * for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."—(Mat. 23:13.) And how can the righteous judgment of God fail to hold them to a strict account for the loss of all the good that might have been accomplished, but for their hindrance?
4. If because of erroneous convictions founded on evil reports, which convictions might be corrected by information easily accessible to them, men hinder the work of a properly accredited gospel minister, I cannot see that their responsibility is at all diminished by the honesty of their convictions.
5. Unwarranted *withdrawal of confidence and support* is as reprehensible as *opposition*. "Curse ye Me-roz, said the angel of the Lord,"—not because of bitter hostility, but for their indifference,—because they left all to others;—"curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."—(Judges 5:23.)

I have said this evil is growing. For every time these rumors are circulated, whether they be true, in whole or in part, or wholly false, seeds are sown which will surely follow the course of nature. The seeds that were scattered in Brooklyn, three years ago, have ripened their harvests and spread their sowing on both sides of the ocean, and new harvests are being daily gathered and sown. *So soon have the fall of the preacher and the prostitution of female virtue* grown up into a prominent theme of fireside-talk, and of conversation by the way, on both continents; and scarcely one newspaper editor, out of a hundred, is willing to stem the tide of vitiated popular sentiment, and close his columns against sensational scandals, that cultivate and develope all the worst passions of the human heart; and which, while they open wide the way to ruin, tend effectually to close the only way of escape from it.

Far be it from me to lower the standard of ministerial purity and excellence enjoined in the gospel. But quite as far be it from me to lower the standard of *Christian duty* to a preacher when his reputation is assailed. His rights are no less sacred than those of other men; and they are not one whit abridged by reason of his holy calling. In all church organizations, ample provision is made for the full and proper investigation of prejudicial rumors. For those, on whom this duty devolves, either to decline ~~through a faithful~~

a thorough

examination, or to withhold from others concerned a decision founded in simple justice, would be base, and cruel, and unmanly, not to say unchristian. If truth require, and they condemn, *there is an end of his imposition*. If truth require, and they acquit, *there ought to be an end of the calumny*. To censure *him* longer is to include *them* in the censure, as well. The same simple, common-sense principles apply to the cases of other members.

It has been said that slander is like "Greek-fire" that burns unquenched under the water,—that no amount of proof can so establish innocence as to stop the tongue of reproach. If this be true, it is but further evidence that this fire has indeed come up from the lake, where "their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." Alas! with some, this *is true*,—with all those who "rejoice in iniquity." They *do* not believe, because they *will* not. The fire will burn on in their hearts, unquenched. Floods of truth cannot extinguish it. Passing years will but increase its fierceness. New victims will not be wanting to supply its fuel, until, presently, in the spirit world, these fires will again mingle their flames with their native, seething billows, whence they sprang, and burn on in and around the soul forever. To quench such fire, but one fountain has been found. It is "the fountain filled with blood." There malice turns to love. Beside this fountain, opened for sin, every true minister of the gospel stands, and, as though God did beseech you by him, cries, "O! come to the fountain of life." "And the Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth, say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—(Rev. 22;17.)

And now my brethren, I have tried faithfully, and in the fear of God, to perform the duty assigned me. In both the selection, and discussion of this theme, I have been prompted by the desire to render you a *real* service. I have sought to communicate general principles deduced from God's word. Let no man imagine that *I* am charging *him* with any sin, and so seek to fortify *himself* against *me*. I invite you rather to that criticism given by the noble Bereans to the preaching of Paul and Silas. Receive the word with all readiness of mind, and search the Scriptures daily, whether these things are so.—(Acts 17;11.) If I have interpreted truly,—if these things *are* so, then it becomes the solemn duty of each of us, both preacher and hearer, to make, before the tribunal of his own conscience, the specific application of the law of Christ to each particular case. May God help us to do this, and so to bridle our tongues that our religion may not be vain.—(Jas. 1;26.)





DELEGATES.

Absentees marked thus (*)

POST OFFICE	PASTORS.	Monthly Meet.	Date of Constitution.	Assenal Fund,	Minute Fund,	Total,	Died,	Excluded,	Admitted,	Restored,	Rec. by Letter,	Baptised,
Monterville.	J J Wilkes,	4 J U	1827	1 00	3 00	66 66	1	1	4	2	2	1
Seaverville.	W L Cochrane,	1 W L	1830	50 50	2 50	90 90	1	1	4	2	2	1
Clements' Stn.	S V McGinnis,	1 S V	1819	1 00	1 25	34 34	1	1	4	2	2	1
Tuskaloosa.	T M Barbours,	2 T M	1850	35 18	75 50	58 1	1	1	3	3	7	4
do	J T Yerby,	3 J T	1876	25 18	50 50	50 50	1	1	1	1	1	2
do	J T Yerby,	2 J T	1877	1 00	1 50	38 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
do	J T Yerby,	1 J T	1878	1 00	1 00	25 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
North Port.	J W Hosmer,	2 J W	1878	50 18	1 00	30 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Coaling Station.	J F M Gibson,	2 J F	1836	50 18	1 00	28 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Tuskaloosa.	W F Gregory,	1 W F	1818	18 18	3 00	165 3	1	1	1	1	1	2
do	J T Yerby,	4 J T	1825	2 00	2 00	94 2	1	1	1	1	1	2
do	J T Yerby,	1 J T	1836	50 18	1 50	44 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Carthage.	W A Barbours,	3 W A	1857	50 18	2 00	67 3	1	1	1	1	1	2
North Port.	J F D Hale,	2 J F	1839	1 00	1 50	39 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Bibbville.	J Jas Hogar,	2 J W	1877	50 18	75 50	14 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
North Port.	W P	4 W P	1856	50 18	1 50	75 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
do	J May	4 J M	1843	35 18	1 50	75 1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Sipsey Turnpike	Jas Hogan,	2 J A	1820	50 18	51 1 00	51 1 00	1	1	1	1	1	2
Bibbville.	J A Mitchell,	2 J M	1831	50 18	2 13	145 2	1	1	1	1	1	2
Sipsey Turnpike	M Chism,	2 J M	1834	50 18	1 00	36 1 00	1	1	1	1	1	2
Sipsey Turnpike	J Mayfield,	3 J M	1859	50 18	1 00	36 1 00	1	1	1	1	1	2